

IRS / INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS EXPAND E-FILING OPTIONS

WASHINGTON -- Through newly-formed partnerships with the private sector, the Internal Revenue Service is expanding electronic filing options for individuals.

"In a dramatic break from past practice, the IRS is featuring these partnerships prominently on its Website," John Dalrymple, Acting Chief Operations Officer, said. "Partnering with industry to provide on-line links to their e-file products and services brings the best offerings of the private and public sectors together."

The IRS Website -- at www.irs.ustreas.gov -- offers links to Nelco, Universal Tax Systems, Drake, H&R Block, Block Financial Corp., and Intuit. By going to the companies' Websites, users may download tax preparation software, obtain e-file services, or find one authorized e-file provider's local offices. The IRS does not charge for e-filing, but the private sector firms have fees ranging from \$4.95 to \$19.95, depending on the product used. If these partnerships succeed in improving taxpayer access to high quality, low cost e-file options, the IRS will consider extending them for the next filing season.

The IRS has also entered into a partnership with 800-TAX REFUND, Inc.

E-filing offers an earlier refund, greater accuracy, and acknowledgment that IRS accepts the return. Last year, nearly 20 million taxpayers used IRS e-file -- almost one out of every six individual tax returns filed.

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“These non-monetary agreements are the first step in expanding partnerships with the electronic filing industry, non-profits, and other public sector organizations that support our efforts to increase e-filing,” said Robert E. Barr, IRS Assistant Commissioner for Electronic Tax Administration. “In the upcoming months, we intend to build on these initial partnerships with more agreements and contracts to further promote e-file products and services for the 1999 filing season.”

Organizations interested in partnering with the IRS to improve e-file offerings should consult the Treasury Department’s Web page at *www.treas.gov/irs/eta*.

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